THE EDGE OF
ONE OF MANY
CIRCLES

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LESSONS IN TRANSNATIONALISM
AS A FRAMEWORK OF KNOWLEDGE
IN THE CRITIQUES OF JOSÉ MARTÍ,
RANDOLPH BOURNE, HERBERT BOLTON
AND WALDO FRANK*

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Resumo: Este ensaio apresenta um estudo comparativo acerca das formas como o imaginário transnacional foi abordado numa seleção de textos de José Martí, Randolph Bourne, Waldo Frank e Herbert Bolton. O estudo examina em que medida estes intelectuais entenderam o transnacional como uma moldura de conhecimento alternativa e com base na qual se poderiam desenvolver interações mais igualitárias, no âmbito das Américas.

Palavras-chave: José Martí; Randolph Bourne; Herbert Bolton; Waldo Frank; Americas; transnacional; mestizaje; borderlands.

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Abstract: This essay offers a comparative study about the ways the transnational imaginary has been tackled in a selection of writings by José Martí, Randolph Bourne, Waldo Frank, and Herbert Bolton. It addresses in particular how these intellectuals envisaged the transnational as an alternative framework of knowledge for the Americas on the basis of which more equal interactions could develop.

Keywords: José Martí; Randolph Bourne; Herbert Bolton; Waldo Frank; Americas; transnational; mestizaje; the borderlands.

Transnationalism has of late become a popular analytical tool in literary and cultural studies. If the nation is usually posited as the classic framework which is able to encompass and foster our understanding of categories such as race, language or ethnicity according to a paradigm of unity and homogeneity, transnationalism is used as the analytical device which allows us to understand nations and their citizens through the relations they establish with other nations. Transnationalism therefore offers a different framework regarding the classical relation of antagonism and essentialism at the core of inter-national relations. Finally, in de-centering the nation, transnationalism tends to break away from ideologies of exceptionalism that ground hierarchies among nations. Heidi Shukla and Sandhya Tinsman identify transnationalism as a category that “focus[es] on shared histories of connection and interaction between the peoples across, beyond or underneath national boundaries and regions – a paradigm directly opposed to the bounded and often essentialized ‘national histories’ of discrete countries, as well as to the central organizing principle of a North-South dichotomy” (Shukla & Tinsman 2).